

# 4-H Public Presentations, Demonstrations, and Illustrated Talks

## 4-H LEADER GUIDE • EM4788E

Public presentations are one of the most rewarding experiences for 4-H members and leaders. As you work with 4-H members on their public presentations, you are opening new doors for many of these young people.

Through giving public presentations, 4-H members learn to:

- express themselves clearly and convincingly
- organize their ideas and present them in a logical order
- research subjects
- have confidence in themselves
- emphasize the major points of a presentation through the use of visuals or examples
- listen to the opinions of others

You have the opportunity to help shy, introverted 4-H members develop confidence, poise, self-esteem, stage presence, and knowledge. You can also help members who are overly aggressive become more sensitive towards others.

With your guidance, members will learn that:

- errors are learning tools
- criticism may be positive
- pride can be displayed in a positive way
- skills and abilities must be used properly

### THE LEADER'S ROLE

In your role as leader, you should:

- talk over title selection with members, but let them make the final choice.
- encourage members to use catchy titles
- urge members to look for new reference sources
- help the presenters see that practice and full dress rehearsal with all the props are important
- help members use the presentation evaluation form to rate their own performances

- critique the members' presentations and help them to improve each time they present
- encourage members to find new audiences for their presentations
- provide opportunities for members to give their presentations to clubs

### DEMONSTRATIONS AND ILLUSTRATED TALKS

Public presentations are divided into two categories—demonstrations and illustrated talks.

A demonstration is a planned presentation by one or more 4-H members who teach by showing and explaining things. The 4-H member describes what he or she is doing and makes something using ingredients, tools, etc. Usually, at the conclusion of a demonstration, the finished product is available for the audience to touch, taste, feel, or test.

An illustrated talk tells how something is done and includes visuals. In an illustrated talk, flip charts, posters, pictures, models, cut outs, slides, flannel board, chalkboard, or real objects are used. There is no finished product. An illustrated talk is the same as a demonstration, except that visual aids are used instead of making an actual product.

### TEACHING BEGINNERS

Approach public presentations with a positive attitude to make your task as a leader easy. Your relaxed attitude toward public presentations influences the 4-H member positively and will help him or her view presentations as a nonthreatening part of the 4-H experience. This is particularly important when teaching new and young 4-H members how to make public presentations.

4-H members should start giving public presentations at project meetings. Encourage members to give impromptu presentations at the teachable moment, without competition.

Impromptu presentations help 4-H members ease into more formal, competitive events with confidence and assurance. Threading a needle while telling how to do it, identifying and demonstrating parts of a stove or a sewing machine, and showing and telling how to cut out a simple garment are only a few examples of simple demonstrations.

Ask members to do impromptu presentations several times prior to giving a formal presentation. This builds self-confidence and confidence in speaking to a group. After several informal opportunities, determine if the member is ready to go on to present.

When 4-H members first progress to formal presentations make certain that their presentations are simple and that they are on the program early to retain excitement and reduce fear. New presenters should be scheduled together and should never follow a sophisticated, polished presentation. Presentations given by members of similar experience and age also should be scheduled together.

Junior leaders can teach young and new members how to give simple demonstrations and illustrated talks. From their own experience, they can provide topics and techniques to help less experienced 4-H'ers overcome shyness.

Encourage new presenters to spend considerable time developing titles and introductions. Catchy titles and good introductions provide smooth and easy starts.

The new presenter may falter and make mistakes. *Help if you can, but stop short of taking over.* In your eagerness to see a good finished product and to help the 4-H member feel like a success, remember that your real responsibility is to develop the presenter.

Several things are important to the member after the presentation.

1. Praise. Applause from peers, a smile, or a nod from the leader as the member walks to a seat are simple forms of recognition that are worth a fortune.
2. Following the presentation, provide a retreat for the member to unwind unnoticed.
3. Review the public presentation evaluation with the member. The 4-H'er should respond to the evaluation and be encouraged to question unclear comments.

When beginning presenters have mastered basic skills at the club level, they may graduate to general club meetings, to community presentations, and finally to state competition. Observe the 4-H member's progress carefully to determine when the member is ready to move to a different level.

## RETAINING THE SEASONED PRESENTER

Encourage 4-H members who have given a number of successful presentations to work more on their own.

Seasoned 4-H presenters:

- choose topics that interest them
- relate topics to their own experiences
- challenge their capabilities
- design presentations for different types of audiences

You can help older 4-H members retain their excitement about public presentations by:

- suggesting current subjects
- putting them in touch with new resources
- teaching them research techniques
- helping them choose subjects that may be useful for different occasions
- providing presentation opportunities
- using them as role models for and teachers of younger members

Older 4-H members can develop outlines based on the three basic parts of a public presentation. They are the introduction, the body, and the summary.

### The Introduction

Teach members to be prepared to introduce themselves, even though most presenters are introduced by someone else. Members should listen carefully when they are being introduced so that they do not repeat the introduction.

Encourage 4-H members to be creative and to try different ways of beginning their presentations.

These might include:

- questions
- statistics concerning the presentation
- a statement of a problem
- a creative, stimulating visual
- showing a completed product
- an exaggerated, ill-prepared conclusion
- comparisons of several things

### The Body

In the body of the presentation, the member should do what he or she said would be done in the introduction. The subject matter and main points should be in the body.

The body of the presentation should be planned based on:

- the steps necessary to carry out the presentation
- the logical order of the steps
- what must be said to explain the order of events and to fill action time
- the materials needed
- visuals—necessary or not

## The Summary

The summary is the last chance the 4-H member has to put his or her point across. Confine remarks to points that were covered in the body. Never introduce new material at this point.

While researching and developing the presentation, members should acquire more information than they present. This additional information prepares them to answer questions at the end of the presentation. Members should either answer questions, promise to do research to find an answer, or refer questions to the audience. Then they should thank the audience for attending their presentation.

Samples, recipes, or an invitation to inspect the final product are appropriate ways to close a presentation.

## STEPS IN DEVELOPING A PRESENTATION

What follows is one way to prepare for a presentation.

- visualize the audience
- choose a subject
- gather information
- work out a plan
- choose equipment and visuals
- practice delivery
- devise a title

### Visualize the Audience

The 4-H member has his or her audience in mind while preparing a presentation. The 4-H'er should consider who will be there—4-H members, leaders, parents, members of another organization? What are their interests? How many will there be? What kind of meeting is it? What does the audience know about the subject? All of these questions are important.

### Choose a Subject

The subject should fit the 4-H member's interests, experience, knowledge, and skills. It should be exciting, not dull; challenging, not routine.

4-H projects provide excellent presentation ideas. If your members find it hard to think of ideas, ask them to open their project manuals and see how many topics they find there.

Success is most likely if a member chooses a subject from his or her own project experience. Familiarity with the topic provides more to talk about, more ease in handling equipment, and less tendency to be upset by questions from the audience.

When a particular topic is under consideration for a presentation, the member might ask these questions:

- is it related to a 4-H project or activity in which I have participated
- is it timely or important
- can I limit the topic to one major, explainable idea
- does it fit the time limit

If the answer to each of these questions is "Yes," it is a good topic and the member is ready for the next step.

### Decide on a Goal

What will the presentation accomplish? Is it to entertain? Stimulate? Convince? Is it to help others learn? Or to show what the member knows? Or both? The member should decide on the response wanted from the audience, and work toward that goal. The beginning member's goal may be simply to show others what has been learned. Experienced 4-H members may want not only to show what they know, but also to convince members of the audience to try what they present.

### Gather Information

Gathering information and researching the demonstration subject is by far the most valuable purpose of the activity. Make members aware of the many resources they may use. Then help 4-H members be selective in choosing resources.

*Use accurate and up-to-date material in all 4-H demonstrations.*

Good information is contained in 4-H project and activity manuals. Extension agents can also suggest publications from Washington State University and other resources. Magazine articles and pictures often suggest interesting and attractive ways to present material. Textbooks can be used for more facts and examples. 4-H members can contact local people who are experts in their professional fields. They can also write to manufacturers for ideas. Some test kitchens, for example, have been glad to share reports on their testing and research with 4-H members.

### Work Out a Plan

Organization is essential to a good presentation and contributes to clarity and good use of time. A carefully thought out, fairly detailed plan is highly

recommended. Younger members are not expected to have as detailed a plan as older members.

The plan helps the member present:

- material in a logical and understandable sequence
- it helps create a balance between explaining and showing
- a plan ensures that visuals, equipment, and supplies all convey information

## Choose Equipment and Visual Aids

The success of a presentation depends on the use of appropriate tools and equipment and on the effective use of visuals. What is shown in a presentation is as important as what is said.

Equipment should be:

- designed for the job; makeshift arrangements show a lack of preparation
- accepted and recommended by authorities
- clean and in good working condition

Visuals, including such things as posters, charts,

models, and pictures should be:

- used only where really needed; have members use the real thing wherever possible; if a demonstration is clear without visuals, don't use them
- large enough to be seen
- lettered large enough and dark enough to be seen by the audience
- uncrowded; it is better to use two or three charts than to have too much information on one neatly done and clean
- on heavy cardboard that will not buckle or bend

Use models for only one of two purposes: to reduce large objects such as animals, furniture, or buildings to a practical scale or to enlarge small operations such as electrical work, sewing techniques, etc., so the audience can see them better. If models are used, they should be well constructed and actually do the intended job.

Encourage members to use the following techniques in handling equipment and visuals:

- make a list of equipment and supplies needed
- use trays to assemble equipment and supplies
- arrange trays on an extra table placed to the side or in back
- plan the arrangement to avoid reaching across
- keep the table clear in front so people can see
- handle props carefully and quietly; have a

folded towel under bowls or pans

- keep the work surface clean; have damp cloths, sponges, paper towels handy; tape a paper sack to table back for garbage
- check posters, charts, and easels before beginning for proper sequence and to see that each is secure
- use step shelves, slant boards, clear bowls, or mirrors to be sure each part of the presentation is visible

Each visual should be tested using these questions:

- is it needed
- does it focus attention
- is it neat and simple
- is it easy to use
- does it fit smoothly into the presentation

A "yes" answer on these points indicates a good choice of visuals.

## Practice Delivery

Practice is important. Each time the presentation is reviewed, the presenter can see whether ideas are in order and are supported with examples, illustrations, or quotations.

Practice helps 4-H members:

- synchronize action and explanation
- do things in logical order
- stay within the time limit
- know whether or not there is sufficient information on the subject
- use equipment skillfully
- know that special equipment is functioning correctly

When preparing contest presentations, arrange practices before several audiences—members, leaders, or parents. Their suggestions on these points will add polish.

- **Posture**—stand tall, do not lean on table or twist one foot behind the other
- **Eye contact with the audience**—talk to the people
- **Voice**—including not only pitch, but also speed of delivery
- **Mannerisms may be distracting to the audience**—pushing back hair, rocking back and forth, etc
- **General appearance**—one dress rehearsal helps the member assess the overall performance

Remember, visuals must be visible. Use the following tables to choose letter size and thickness, colors of letters, and background.

| <b>Letter Size for Visibility*</b>                |                    |                       |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>Distance</i>                                   | <i>Letter Size</i> | <i>Line Thickness</i> |
| 10 feet                                           | 1/2 inch           | 3/32 inch             |
| 20 feet                                           | 3/4 inch           | 1/8 inch              |
| 50 feet                                           | 2 inches           | 5/16 inch             |
| 100 feet                                          | 3 1/2 inches       | 11/16 inch            |
| 300 feet                                          | 11 inches          | 2 inches              |
| * Assuming good light, good eyes, and good color. |                    |                       |

| <b>Color Combinations for Visibility</b> |                             |
|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Black on yellow                       | 17. Yellow on black         |
| 2. Black on orange                       | 18. Scarlet-red on yellow   |
| 3. Yellow-orange on navy blue            | 19. Yellow on navy blue     |
| 4. Bottle green on white                 | 20. Purple on yellow        |
| 5. Scarlet-red on white                  | 21. Purple on orange        |
| 6. Black on white                        | 22. White on emerald green  |
| 7. Navy blue on white                    | 23. Bottle green on yellow  |
| 8. White on navy blue                    | 24. Scarlet-red on orange   |
| 9. Yellow-orange on black                | 25. Emerald green on white  |
| 10. White on black                       | 26. Yellow on purple        |
| 11. White on bottle green                | 27. Orange on purple        |
| 12. White on scarlet-red                 | 28. Bottle green on orange  |
| 13. White on purple                      | 29. Emerald green on yellow |
| 14. Purple on white                      | 30. Orange on yellow        |
| 15. Navy on yellow                       |                             |
| 16. Navy blue on orange                  |                             |

## Consider the Title

The title is the last step in preparing a presentation. Encourage the member to concentrate on the idea for the presentation and develop it first. The title will come later.

Most effective titles are short, descriptive, and image-provoking. A title should suggest the presentation subject without telling the whole story.

## EVALUATION

As a 4-H leader, ask yourself:

- to what extent did the 4-H member assume responsibility in planning and presenting his or her presentation
- did the presentation lead the member into new learning or expanded interest in 4-H
- did the member grow in maturity through participation in the presentation program

Although we look upon 4-H presentations as a way for members to acquire increased confidence and poise, greater knowledge, and more selfreliance, presentations are often competitive.

The 4-H'er will measure success in terms of personal feelings of satisfaction, the response of the audience, and the rating of the judges. 4-H members may understand the process better if leaders explain the job of the public presentation judge and what this person is expected to do.

The tasks of the judge are to:

- rate each public presentation according to an acceptable standard
- select public presentation winners when appropriate
- give reasons for judging decisions
- give constructive suggestions

In making decisions, judges evaluate presentations using the 4-H presentation evaluation form (C0430). They question presenters to clarify their presentations or to test their knowledge or background. Judges are instructed to ask questions only on material covered in the presentation. Judges base decisions on results of the presentation evaluation form and on total impact of the presentation on judge and audience. They encourage the presenter and give either oral or written suggestions for improvement.

Leaders and parents can help members accept the judge's decision and can sustain member interest in giving competitive presentations by:

- acquainting members with the evaluation form judges use by using the form during practice.
- giving members verbal approval often, so tangible awards do not become the only form of recognition
- helping members understand that participation in competitive events is a worthwhile activity regardless of where they place

## DEVELOPING PUBLIC PRESENTATION IDEAS

Finding the right topic for a public presentation is often a challenge. You can help members choose and develop



an appropriate topic using these hints and your own creativity. Encourage 4-H members to choose familiar subjects that they enjoy. Make suggestions to stimulate members' thinking. Observe 4-H members' interests and accumulate resource materials to support their research. Help members develop outlines of their presentations. Provide opportunities for 4-H members to practice. Be sure members develop a new public presentation each 4-H year. Help 4-H members find audiences for their

presentations such as extension and general public organizations, service clubs, homemaker clubs, granges, other youth groups, forums, youth rallies, state conferences, conventions, etc.

Public presentations are an integral part of every member's total 4-H experience. Your role is essential to the success of the young people with whom you will work. Use your imagination, be creative, and expect the best. You'll be glad you did!

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## APPENDIX

### Public Presentation Ideas

#### *Agricultural Engineering*

1. Tractor Projects
  - a. Air, Fuel and Heat Equals Combustion
  - b. Care and Maintenance of a Battery
2. Small Engine Projects
  - a. Tune-up of a Small Engine
  - b. Preparing the Lawnmower for Winter Storage
  - c. The Carburetor—Mouth of the Small Engine
3. Electric Energy
  - a. Grounding for Electric Safety
  - b. Simple Electrical Repairs
  - c. Conserve Energy with Insulation
4. Automotive
  - a. Keep Your Spark Plug Sparkling
  - b. For the Life of Your Battery
  - c. Let Your Engine Breathe

#### *Wildlife*

1. Skinning Techniques for
  - a. Nutria
  - b. Beaver
  - c. Raccoon, etc.
2. How to Build a
  - a. Woodduck Nesting Box
  - b. Woodduck Nesting Box from Old Tires
  - c. Bird Feeder
  - d. Duck Blind
3. How to Build Water Sampling Equipment for Wildlife Field Studies

#### *Horse*

1. Saddle Cleaning and Care
2. Showmanship or Horsemanship
3. Hoof Care
4. Worming the Horse (Internal Parasites)
5. Feeds for Horses
6. Horse Safety

#### 7. Determining the Age of a Horse by Its Teeth

#### 8. Grooming

#### *Home Economics*

##### *Clothing*

1. Castoffs to Showoffs—recycling clothes
2. Put a Little Trim in Your Life—ways to apply and use trim on clothes, home accessories
3. A Pressing Engagement—when and how to use pressing equipment when sewing
4. Methods for Marking Fabrics
5. Matching Stripes or Plaids
6. Stay Stitching
7. Selecting and Using Shears

##### *Family Life*

1. Playdough Fun with a Little One
2. Learning about Colors (using paint or plastic colored transparencies)
3. Learn a New Skill (making a toy that helps a child)
4. Bathing the Baby
5. Making an Accordion Book for Children
6. Making "Paint Brush" Cookies

##### *Health and Safety*

1. Health
  - a. First Aid
  - b. Care of Teeth
  - c. Exercise
  - d. Health Care and Nutrition for Future Mothers
2. Safety
  - a. Lifting Heavy Objects
  - b. Using Striking Tools
  - c. Smoke Detectors and Fire Extinguishers
3. Bicycle
  - a. Adjusting a Bike to Fit
  - b. Repairing a Tire
  - c. Customizing a Bicycle

### *Home Environment*

1. Color Planning—color in home decorating
2. Furniture Arrangement
3. Furniture Selection—furniture facts and shopping tips
4. You Can Make It—furnishings to make and use
5. First Aid for Furniture—simple repairs
6. Creative Wall Hangings from a Cardboard Loom
7. Weaving Chair Seats

### *Management*

1. How to Write a Check
2. Making a File for Important Papers
3. Organize Your Closet

### *Nutrition*

1. Snacks that Are Within My Bounds (Weight and Nutrition Wise)
2. It's My Life—foods I need
3. Eating Out and Staying Within Bounds
4. Foods and the Athlete
5. Canning Low Acid Vegetables (Snap Beans)
6. Canning Fruit (Pears or Peaches)
7. Making My Favorite Preserves
8. Freezing Vegetables
9. Freezing Fruit
10. Freezing Foods for Special Occasions
11. Food Gifts
12. Why Be Concerned about Weight
13. Break Your Fast
14. How to Get More Milk Each Day
15. Nutritious Snacks
16. The Art of Kneading Bread
17. Fondue Fun with Cheese
18. Super Simple Scrambled Eggs
19. Spice and Egg Cookery
20. The Art of Stir-Fry Vegetables

### *Plant Sciences*

#### *Agronomy*

1. Taking a Soil Sample
2. How to Test Seed for Germination

#### *Forestry*

1. Forest Tree Planting
2. Christmas Tree Shearing

### *3. Chain Saw Safety*

### *4. Paper Making*

### *Horticulture*

1. Autumn Imagination
2. Country Corsages
3. Designing with Flowers
4. Creating with Dried Flowers
5. Spotlighting the Seasons
6. Christmas Magic
7. Deep Woods Creation
8. Go Wild with Mother Nature
9. The Great Pumpkin
10. Feast on My Centerpiece
11. Nature's Way
12. Jelly Jewels
13. Pick Your Pickle
14. Citrus—The Fabulous Fruit
15. You Won't Strike Out with Peanuts
16. Propagating Ferns

### *Floral Arrangements*

1. Triangular Arrangements
2. Balance—Symmetrical and Asymmetrical
3. Create Balance with Accessories
4. Making a Formal Arrangement
5. Constructing a Corsage
6. Arrangements from Weeds

### *Fruits and Vegetables*

1. Black Plastic Mulch in Vegetable Production
2. Transplants in Cold Frames, Hot Beds, and

### *Greenhouses*

3. Roadside Market
4. Fruit Crops in the Landscape

### *Plant Pathology*

1. Proper Use of Hose-End Sprayer

### **Idea Sources**

- 4-H Project Books
- Extension Publications
- Educational Supply Stores
- Sunset Books ("How To" Books)
- Readers' Digest—Household Maintenance Guide
- Electric Power Supply Companies

- Electric Co-ops
- American Red Cross
- Boy Scout Field Manual
- Rice Council; PO Box 22802 (Foods); Houston, TX 77027
- Simple Home Repairs—Publication
- Energy Conservation—Extension Publication #1034
- E.R.D.A. Energy Curriculum guide
- Periodicals
- National 4-H News
- 4-H Slide Set—Show and Tell the Demonstration Way, Parts I and 11 (available from 4-H office)



4-H 

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